Game
without
Thrones
Agile Organization Built From Lego

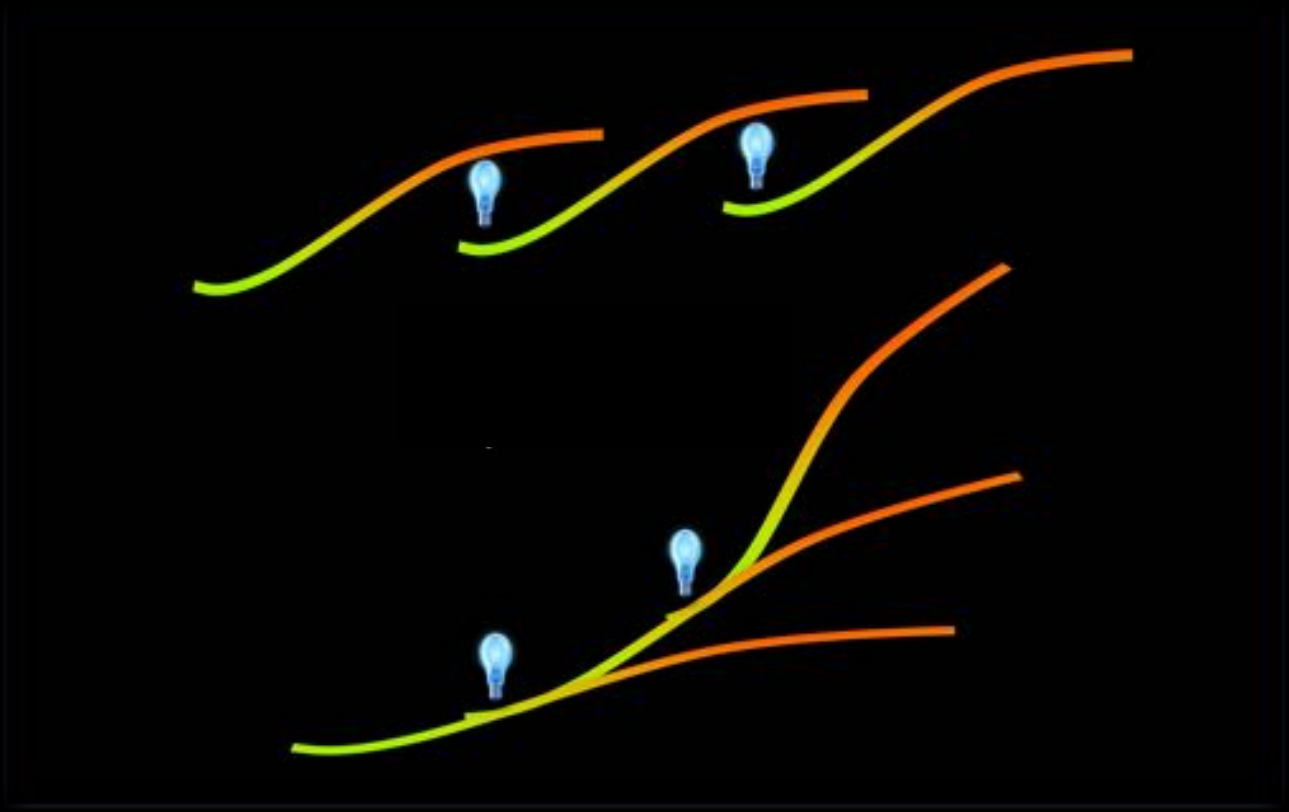
What's an Agile Organization?

- e**X**ponential return
- **S**imple design
- **C**ontinuous throughput
- **A**utonomous teams
- **L**earning triple-loop
- **E**cosystems thinking

www.xscalealliance.org

eXponential return

- Products are service ecosystems
- Product return curves are sigmoids
- Don't chain the curves; stack them

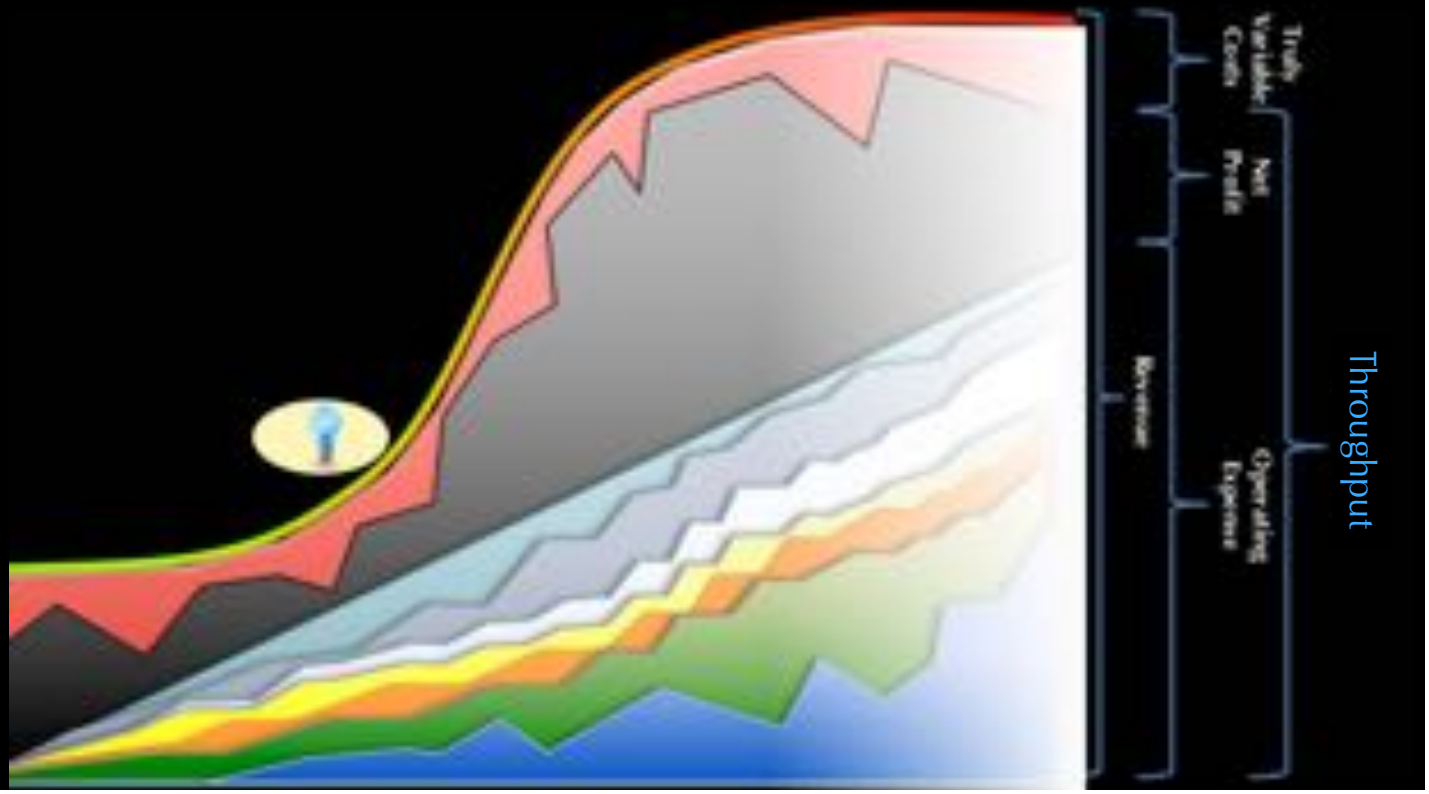


- Design means the elegance of minimum
- Not look and feel; how the ecosystem works
- Design, Delivery & DevOps hand-in-glove

Simple design

- At one time there's **one** bottleneck constraint
- Work on other constraints is premature
- Because it can't increase Throughput

Continuous throughput

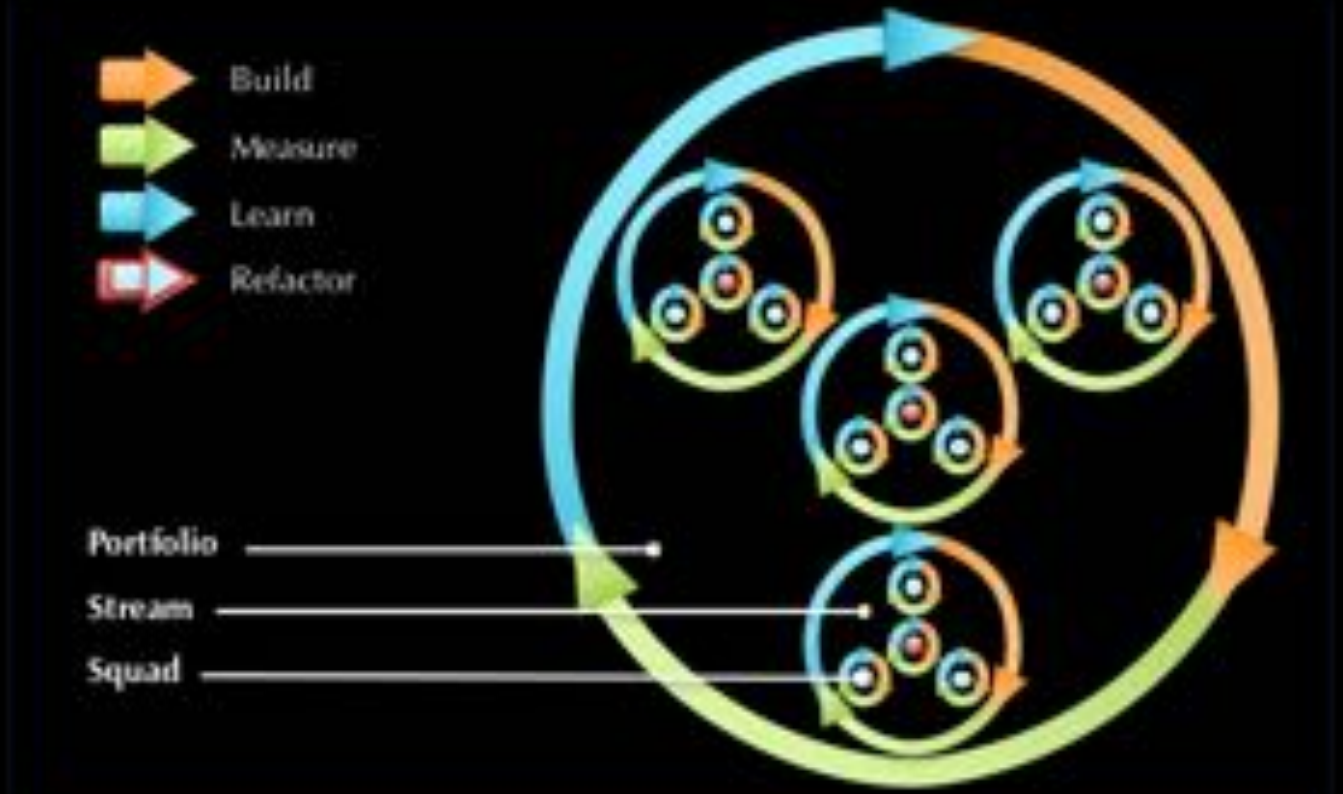


Autonomous Teams

- Self-organizing teams don't have masters
- Self-managing streams don't have owners
- Leadership as a Service + Chapter Meetings

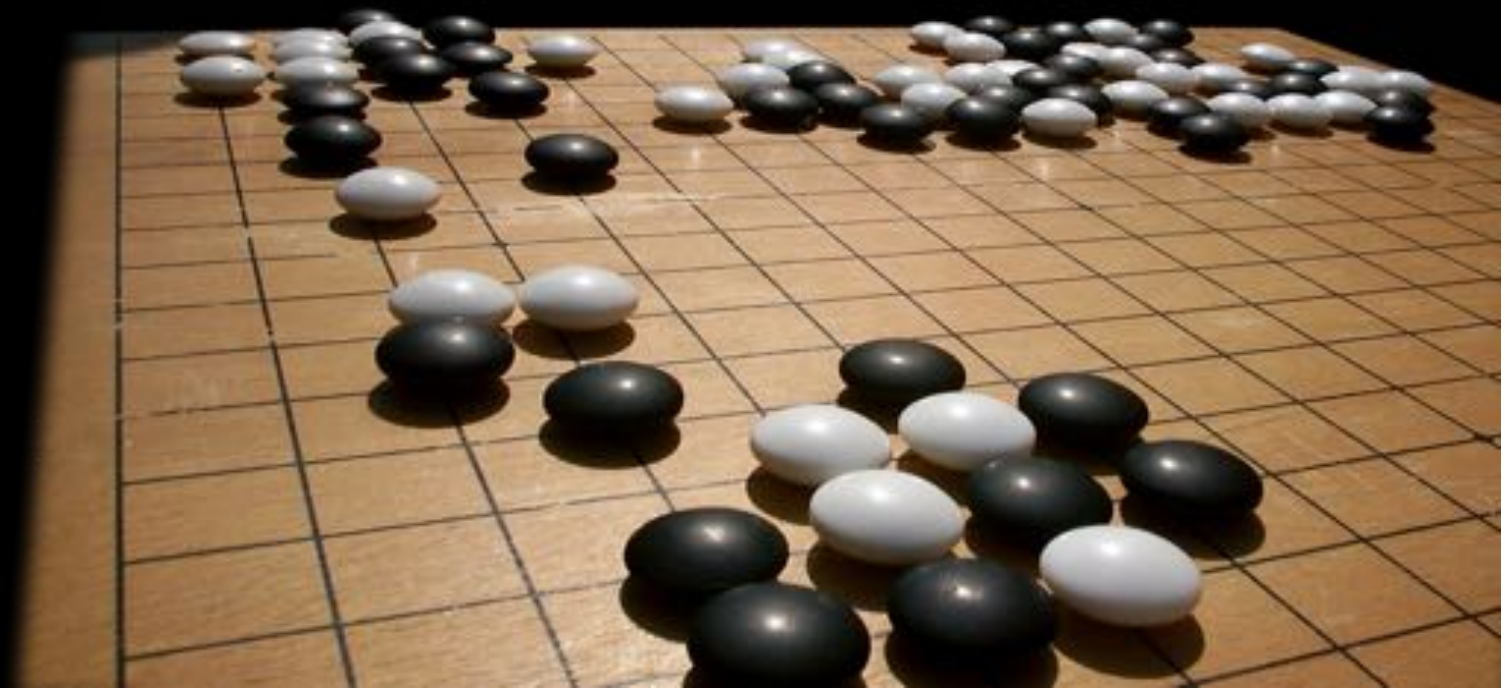
- Learning What, How & How to learn How
- Self-Organizing Transformation: Steel Threads
- Continuous Delivery x Continuous Learning

triple loop
Learning



Ecosystems thinking

- Ecosystems are networks of mutual benefit
- Whole board: think globally, act locally
- Avoiding hill-climbing: iterative and reductive



What's the difference between Agile Organization and some other kind?

- No Command & Control
- Maximum Meeting Size = 5
- Collaboration Loop Limit = 4

Collaboration Loops are conversations needed to get two people to work together.

The Collaboration Loop Limit is the maximum length Collaboration Loop in some group of people.

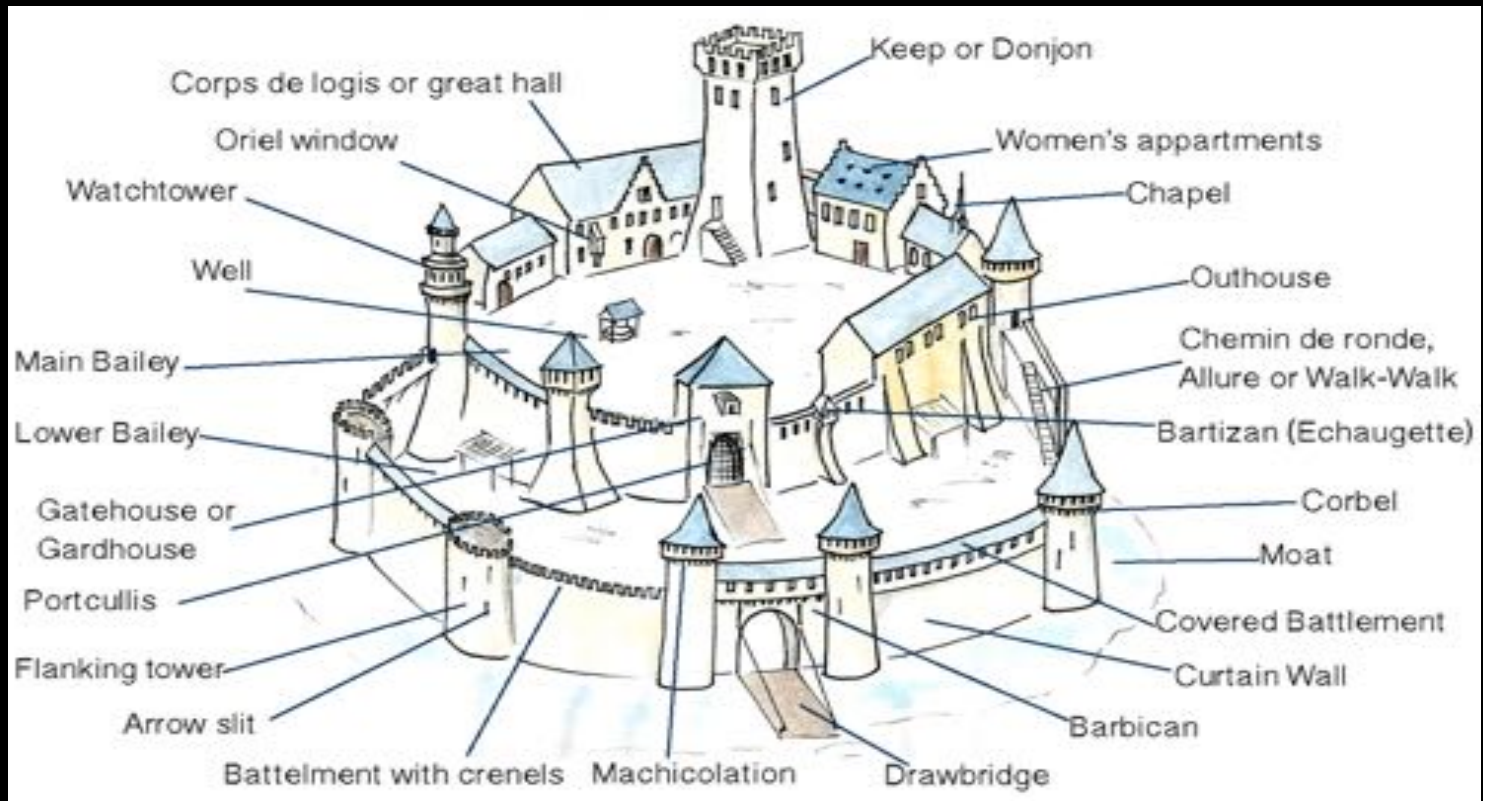
- Noble houses can't build; they're busy fighting
- Wildlings barter engineering to avoid fighting
- Wildlings work as a holarchy, not a hierarchy

Question:

Why would Wildlings build a Castle?

Answer:

No one else can



Squads

- 5 person squads
- Each member has a different chapter
- Each chapter has a different metric

Thenns, Giants, Frozen Shore, Ice River Clan, Cave People …

Chapters

Chapters cross-link the squads

The Artist: metric is geometric and scale symmetry. Focuses breadth-first, never losing sight of the whole.

The Architect: metric is enclosed volume. Focuses on reusable practices, tools and building techniques

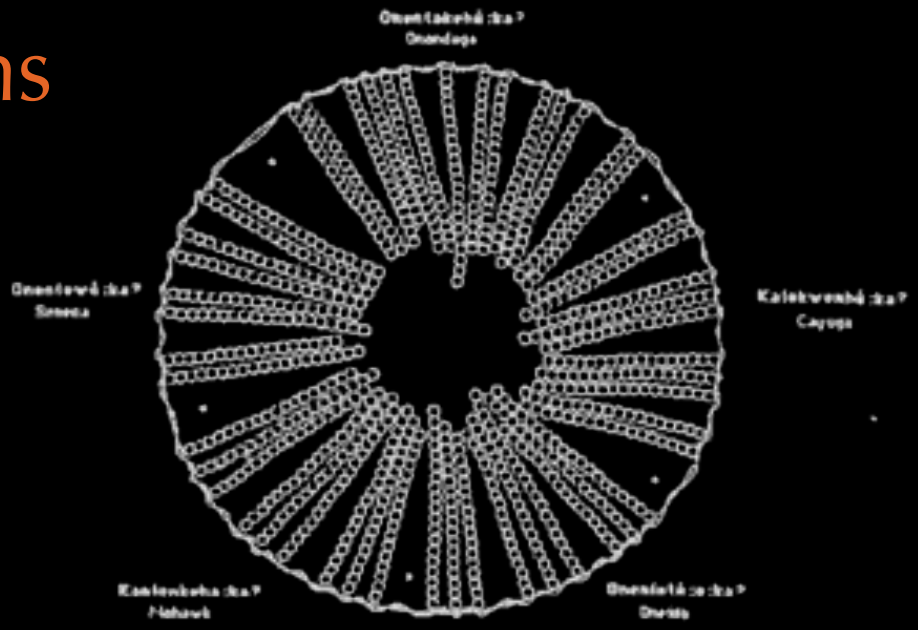
The Merchant: metric is # of different rooms. Focuses design on experiences of high-born lords and ladies

The Maester: metric is sturdiness. Integrity vs winter, wobbles and walkers. Focuses on root causes.

The Coach: metric is balance – the multiple of all the other metrics. Focuses work on the current bottleneck.

Streams

- No more than 4 Squads per Stream
- Each Stream builds separately
- Integration is via “Treaty Chains”
  - Squad to Squad
  - Stream to Stream



Our Four Ceremonies

Five minutes per ceremony

- Sprint: each squad builds castle Features!
- Chapter Meeting: coordinate squads, propose Treaties!
- Stream Refactoring: integrate features into the castle
- Retro: improve workflow & accept/modify Treaties

The Small Council meets during Refactoring

Leadership as a Service

- Squads make decisions by unanimous consensus
- Unless the Coach says that's taking too long – if so:
- The Coach taps the role that best fits the decision
- The Coach never makes the decision themselves

The Small Council

- Chapter Meetings each pick a leader – rotating!
- Leaders form a Small Council per release cycle
- Resolves cross-cutting concerns & feature priorities
- The Coach-Chapter Leader coaches the Council

Sprint Zero

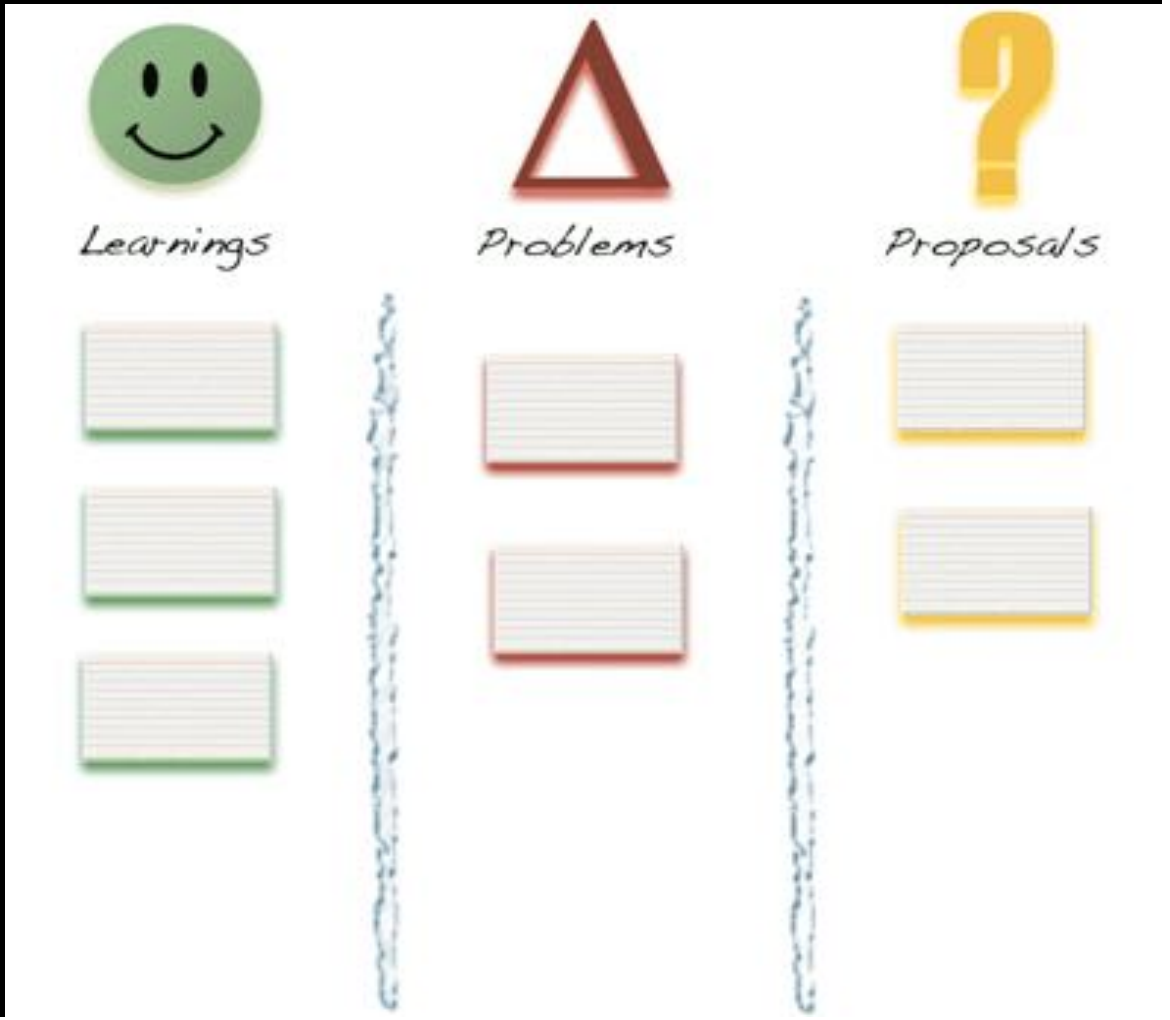
Brainstorm & Prototype Whole Castle Layout

- Work only in your squad's area: don't attempt to integrate your work with the other squads yet!
- Autonomy: focus on getting efficient workflow into your own squad during this initial sprint
- Breadth-first thinking – experiment and adapt. Sketchy and weird ideas are welcome!

Chapter Meetings:
Proposing Treaties and Features:

Treaty: If the Crows will work on foundations of the wall …
The Frozen Shore Clan will build towers on either side …

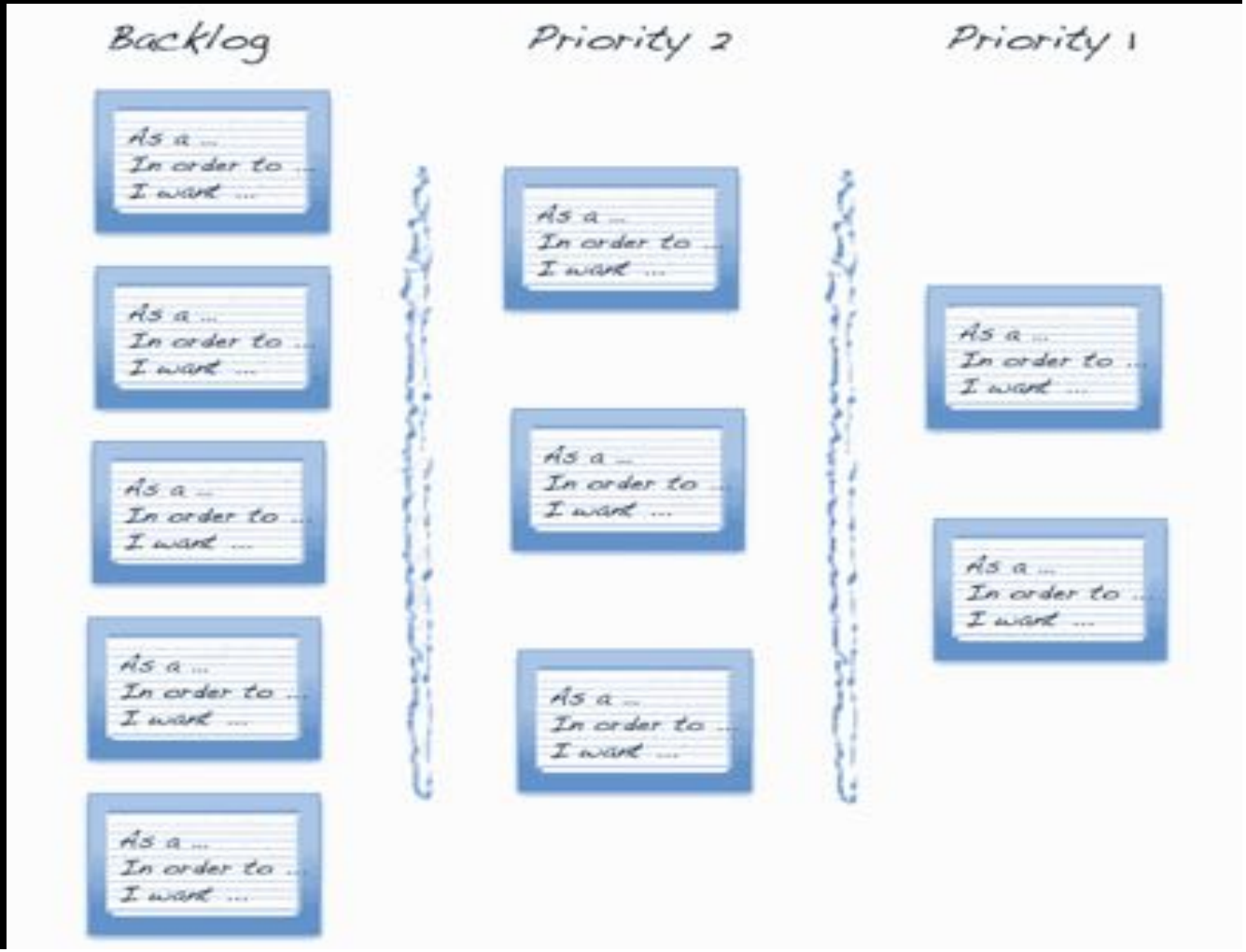
Feature: As a Dragon
In order to live under the castle
I want a basement cave & exit



Mob Refactoring & Small Council

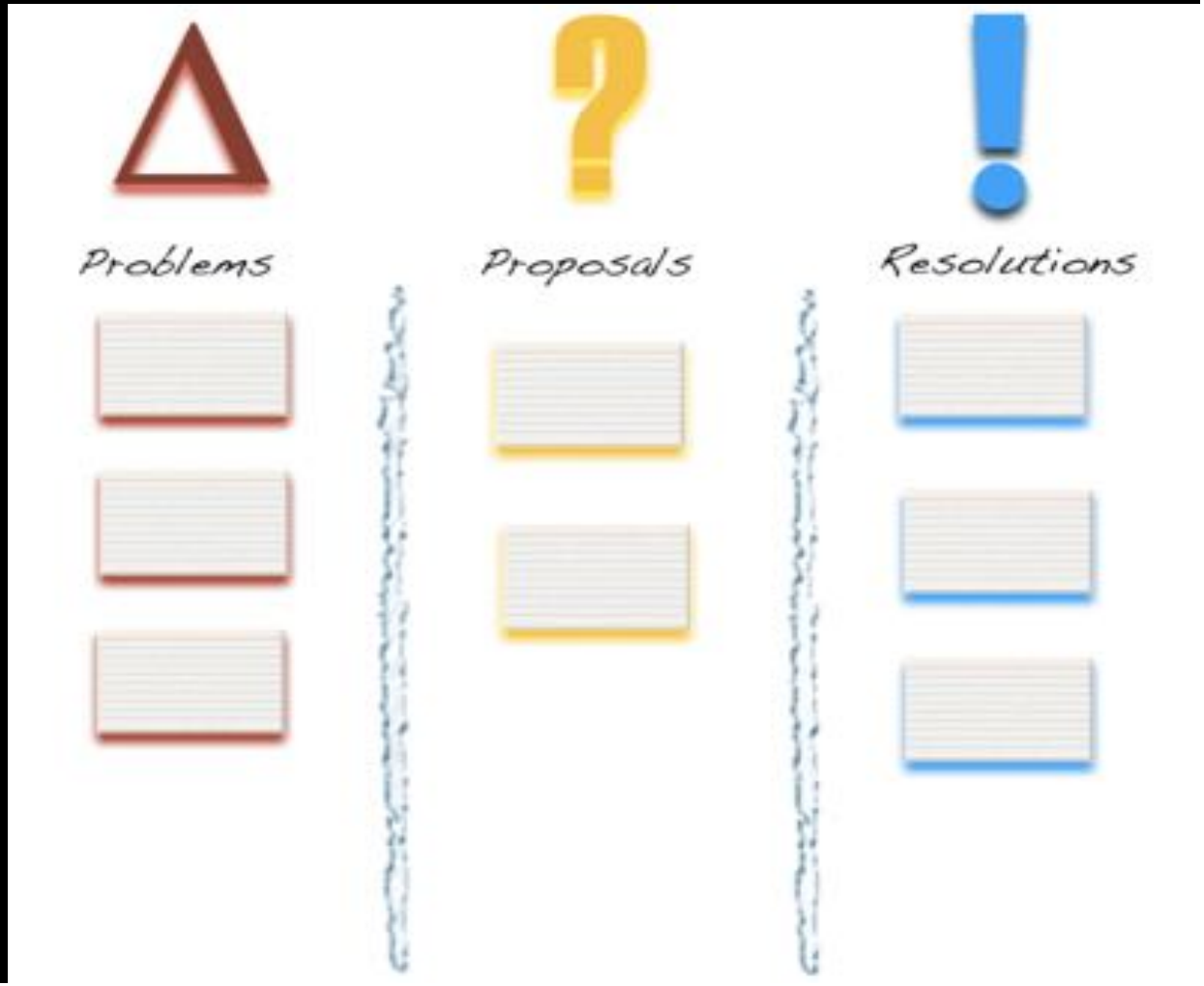
While the Small Council prioritizes New Features

Their Stream Refactors finished work into the Castle



Squad Retros:
Reject or Accept Treaties

And identify & fix
squad workflow problems



Sprint One

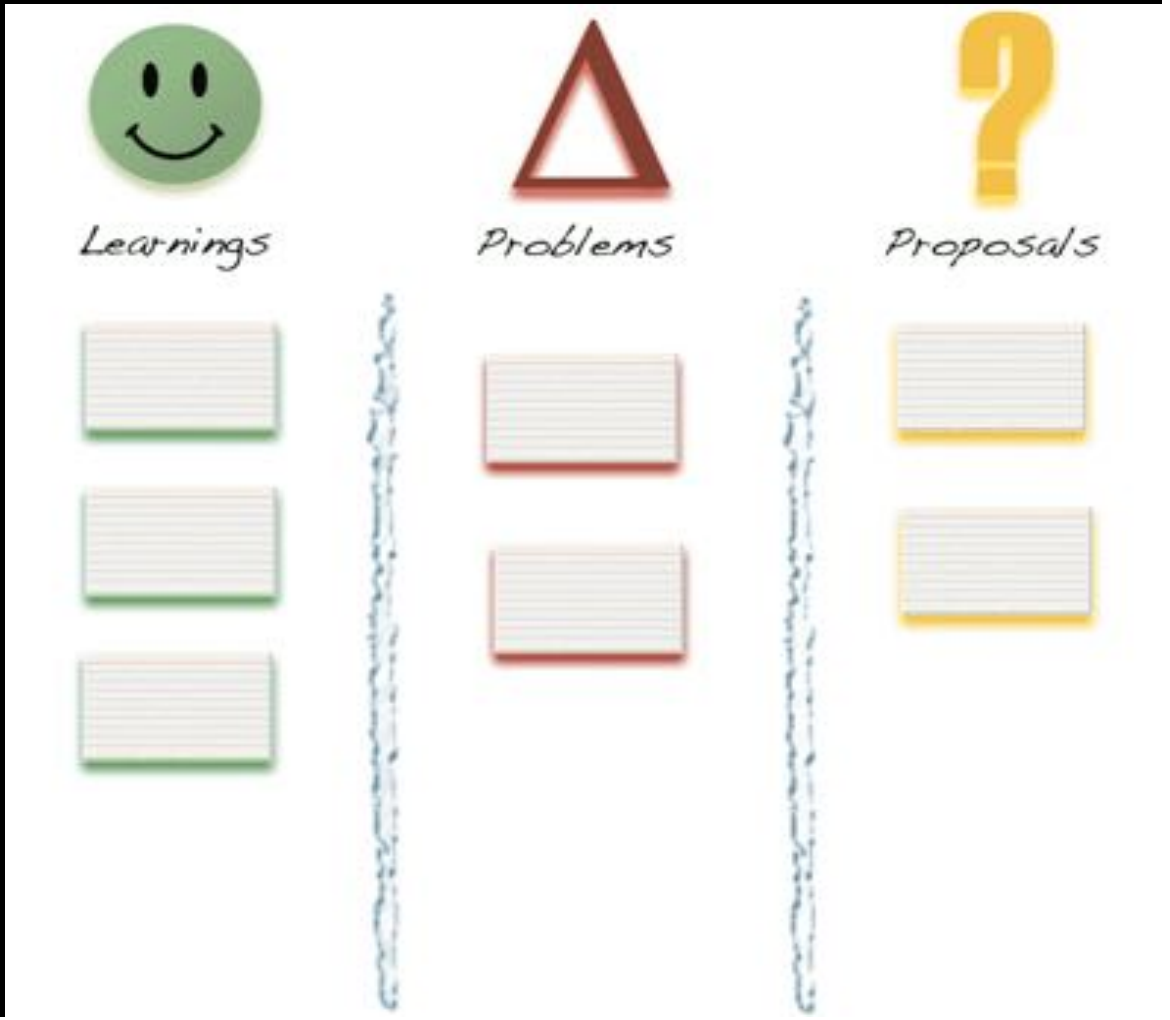
Each squad picks the highest priority Feature (finish one before picking another)

- Build it in your own area: Don't attempt to refactor your work into the Castle yet!
- Autonomy: focus on improving your particular metric in your own squad during this sprint
- Non-interference: don't worry about what the other squads are doing yet!
- Don't add to or remove Lego from the Castle!

Chapter Meetings:
Proposing Treaties and Features:

Treaty: If the Crows will work on foundations of the wall …
The Frozen Shore Clan will build towers on either side …

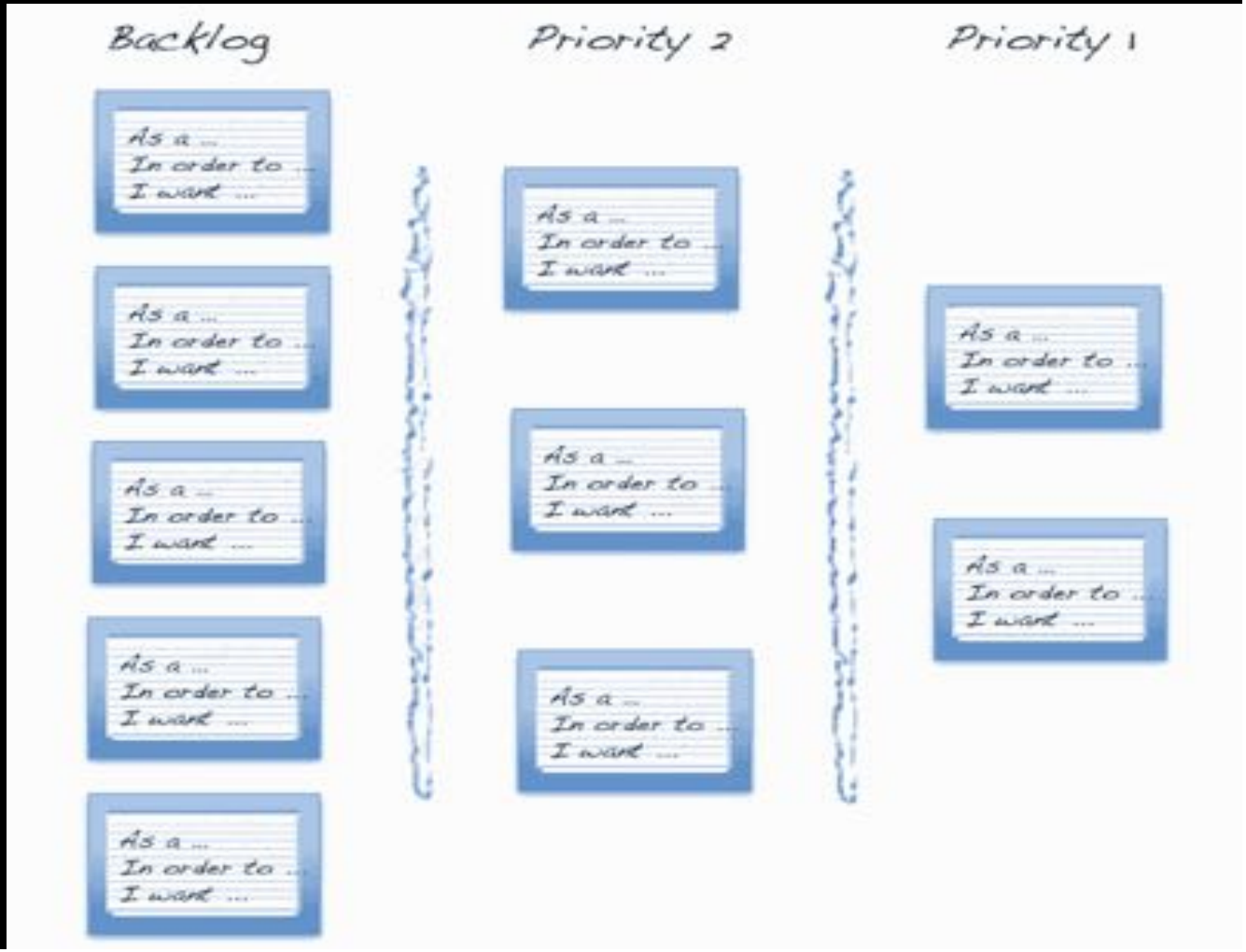
Feature: As a Dragon
In order to live under the castle
I want a basement cave & exit



Mob Refactoring & Small Council

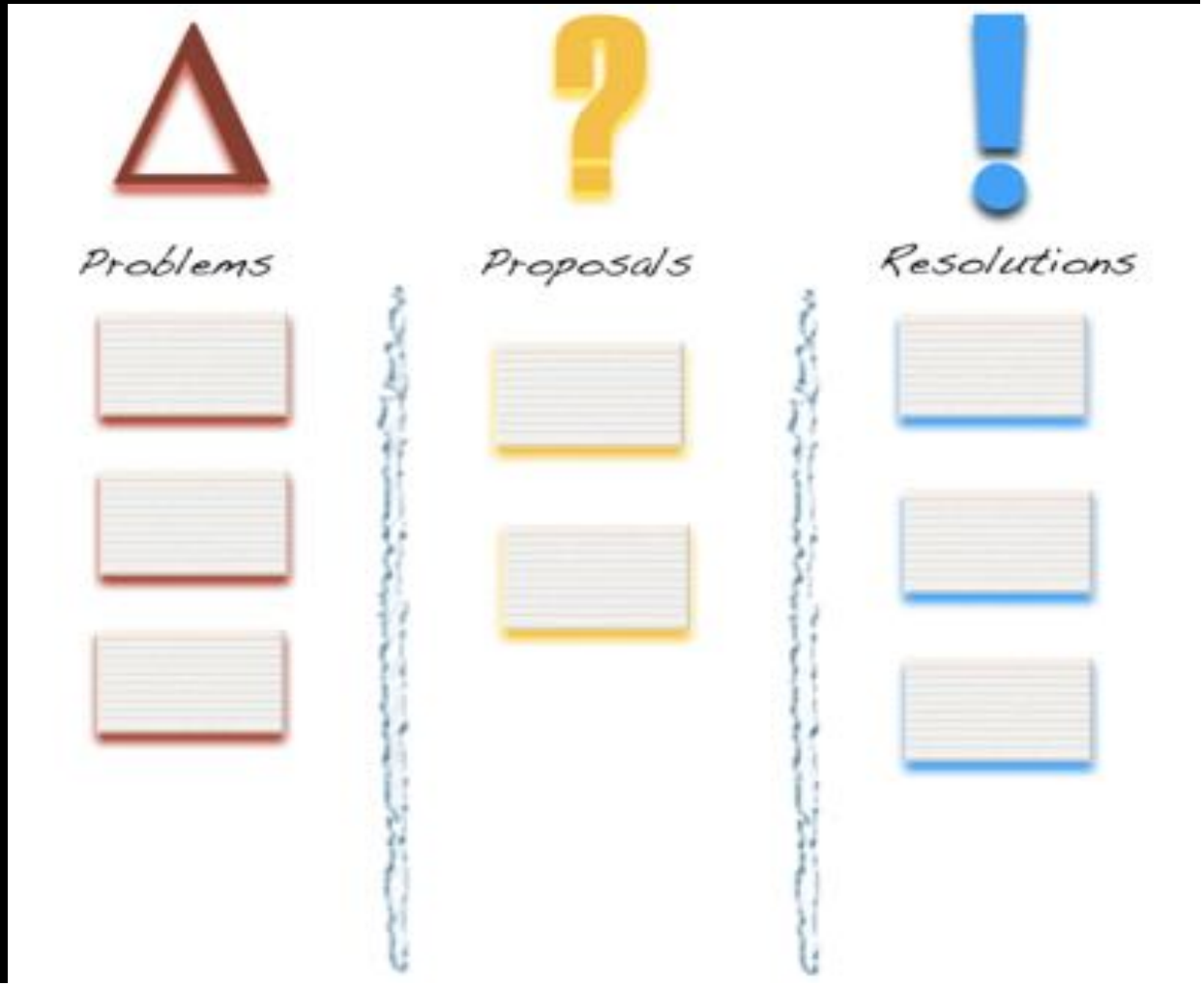
While the Small Council prioritizes New Features

Their Stream Refactors finished work into the Castle



Squad Retros:
Reject or Accept Treaties

And identify & fix
squad workflow problems



Sprint Two

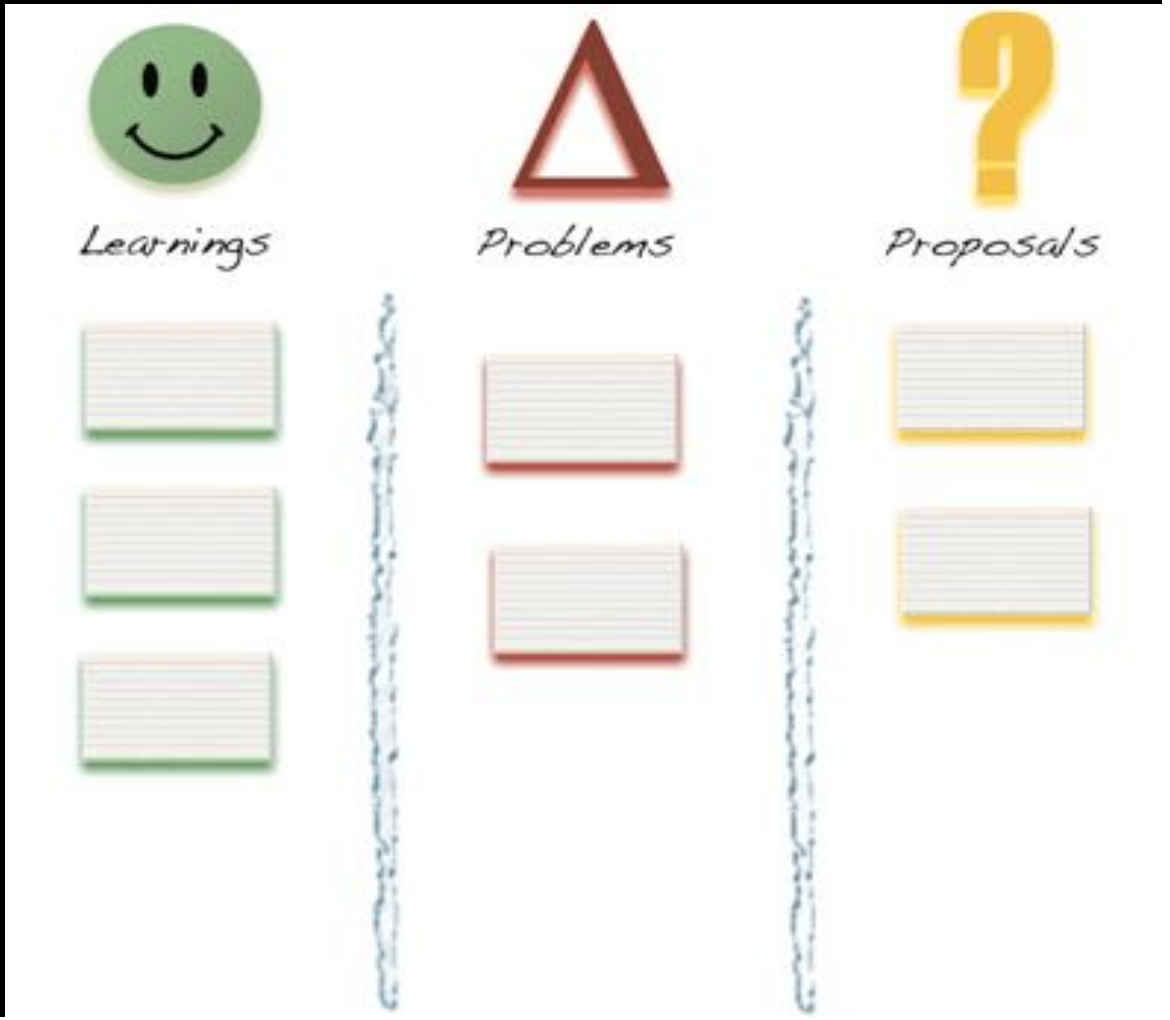
Each squad picks the highest priority Feature (finish one before picking another)

- Build it in your own area: Don't attempt to refactor your work into the Castle yet!
- Autonomy: focus on improving your particular metric in your own squad during this sprint
- Non-interference: don't worry about what the other squads are doing yet.
- Don't add to or remove Lego from the Castle!

Chapter Meetings:
Proposing Treaties and Features:

Treaty: If the Crows will work on foundations of the wall …
The Frozen Shore Clan will build towers on either side …

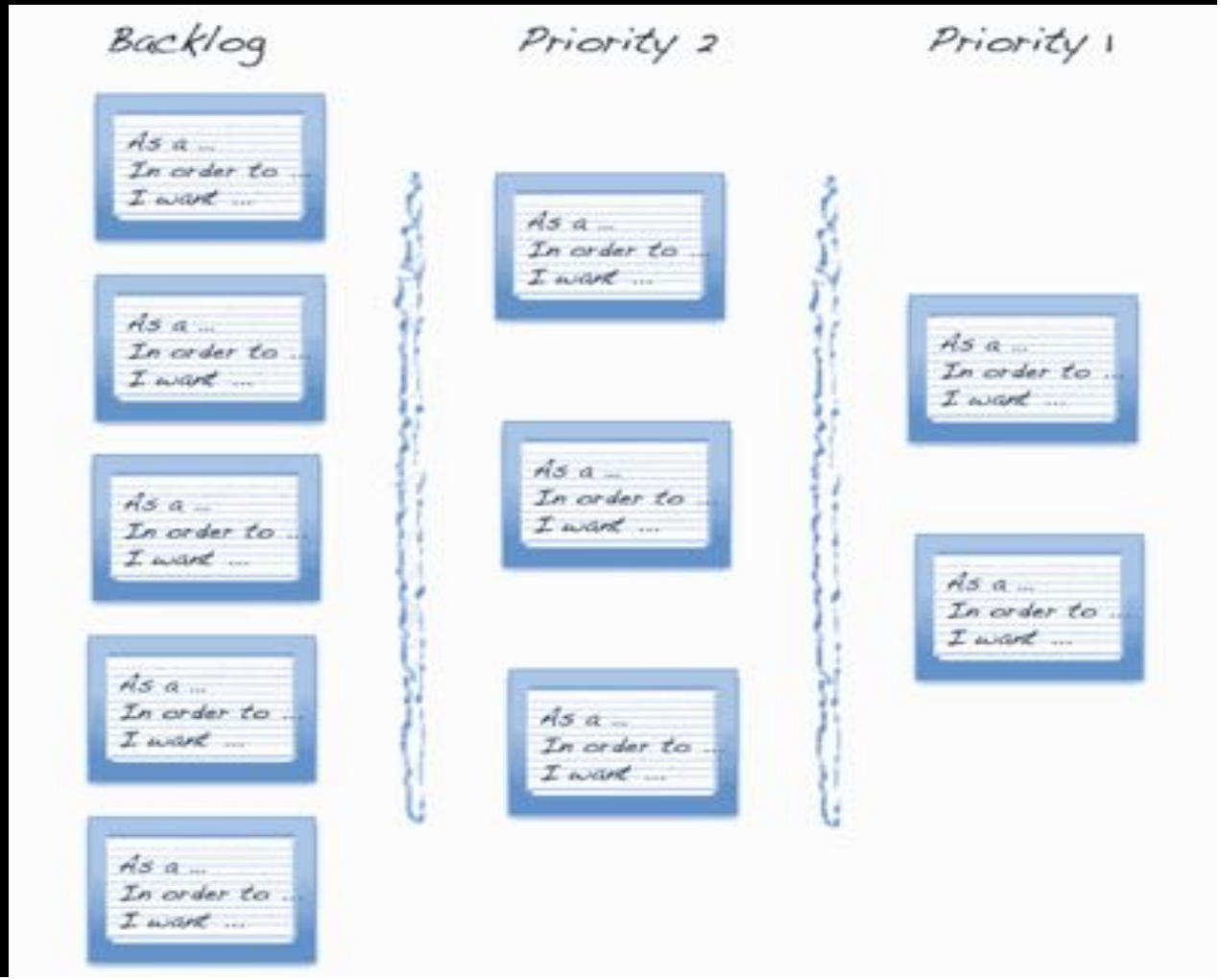
Feature: As a Dragon
In order to live under the castle
I want a basement cave & exit



Mob Refactoring &
Small Council

While each Stream's
Small Council prioritizes
New Features

Their squads Refactor
finished work into
their Castle



Stream Integration

Council members Integrate all Stream Castles into one great big one.

The rest of us make decorations for it.

Take Photos But Beware the Dragons!

An unretouched photo of what happens when we try to Integrate big chunks of Lego without being very careful!

Portfolio Integration

Stream Councils split into Chapters

Stream Chapters each pick a Leader

Leaders form a Portfolio Council

Take Photos But Beware the Dragons!

An unretouched photo of what happens when we try to Integrate even bigger chunks of Lego without being very careful!

GAME WITHOUT THRONES
AN AGILE ORGANIZATION
BUILT FROM LEGO
XSCALE